

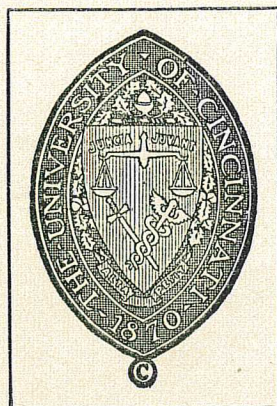
REPORT of the  
ALLEY  
DWELLING  
AUTHORITY

1937

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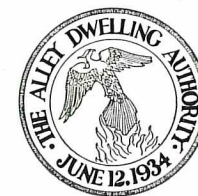
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REPORT OF THE  
ALLEY DWELLING  
AUTHORITY FOR  
THE DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR



JULY 1, 1936 - JUNE 30, 1937

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UNITED STATES  
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THE ALLEY DWELLING AUTHORITY  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MELVIN C. HAZEN, *Chairman*  
*President, Board of Commissioners*  
*District of Columbia*

ARNO B. CAMMERER  
*Executive Officer*  
*National Capital Park and Planning Commission*

HOWARD A. GRAY  
*Director of Housing*  
*Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works*

JOHN IHLDER  
*Executive Officer and Secretary*

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LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

THE ALLEY DWELLING AUTHORITY,  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,  
*November 1, 1937.*

THE PRESIDENT

SIR: The Alley Dwelling Authority for the District of Columbia has the honor to submit herewith its report for the fiscal year 1936-37, in accordance with section 5 (a) of the District of Columbia Alley Dwelling Act, approved by you on June 12, 1934. This section requires that

The Authority shall make a report to the President, which he shall transmit to Congress at the beginning of each regular session, giving a full and detailed account of all operations under the provisions of this act for the preceding fiscal year.

The preceding report described the Authority's work from the time of its creation, covering a period of approximately a year and a half. The present report deals with a single fiscal year except that an occasional footnote indicates a sequence to what is described in the text.

During this second complete year, due to allocations made by you, the Authority was able to carry forward its program of slum reclamation and rehousing. Now that the Wagner-Steagall bill has been enacted by Congress as the United States Housing Act of 1937, The Alley Dwelling Authority hopes that it may be enabled to progress more rapidly.

Very respectfully,

MELVIN C. HAZEN,  
*Chairman, The Alley Dwelling Authority.*

Dep.

## SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OBJECTIVE

To reclaim approximately 176 squares that contain inhabited alleys.

### PROGRAM ASSUMES FORM

Activities reflect various phases of slum reclamation and rehousing.

### CONSTITUTIONALITY UPHELD

Alley Dwelling Act sustained in two condemnation suits. Constitutionality issue not raised in a third suit.

### COOPERATION IN SLUM RECLAMATION

Sites sold to quasi-public agency and private individual demonstrate practicability of such cooperation.

### FINANCIAL OBJECTIVE

To complete work promptly and without a deficit. Costs are kept down to keep down rents. At present assets equal all funds advanced, \$865,825.67.

### FINANCIAL STATUS

July 1, 1936, \$316,380.70; June 30, 1937, \$352,840.91. Allocation, March 15, \$250,000; unobligated balance returned as of June 30, \$74,368.33.

### CAREFUL PLANNING PRECEDES SITE PURCHASES

Sites are selected after thorough study. Acquisitions average 112.8 percent of assessed values—17.2 percent below legal limit of 130 percent.

### LOW-RENT DWELLINGS

Designed to meet needs of groups in economic scale from lowest income to self-dependence.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Eleven squares reclaimed; four low-rent housing projects, two completed, two under contract; five nonresidential projects completed; two sites sold. Other squares in process of acquisition and development.

## CONTENTS

	Page
Letter of Submittal . . . . .	III
Summary of the Report . . . . .	IV
Frontispiece . . . . .	VI
The Authority's Program Assumes Form . . . . .	1
Constitutionality Upheld . . . . .	1
The Authority and Private Enterprise . . . . .	2
Financial Policy . . . . .	3
Financial Practice . . . . .	4
Financial Status . . . . .	6
Project Practice . . . . .	10
Social Practice. . . . .	13
Accomplishments. . . . .	15
Description of Projects . . . . .	17
Organization and Personnel. . . . .	18
Statistical Tables. . . . .	20





←BEFORE . . .

. . . AND AFTER!



THIS TRANSFORMATION of old dilapidated houses was effected by the Alley Dwelling Authority in its first low-rent housing development, Hopkins Place. Note the disappearance of ram-

shackle fences and yard toilets, their roofs littered with junk. At the time the second photograph was taken, the reconditioned houses had been occupied, principally by their original alley tenants, for 9 months. No coal in the bathtubs—bathtubs have been installed—but flowers in the small rear yards.



HOPKINS PLACE. In redevelopment of this site, which formerly contained London Court, an inhabited alley, the Authority reconditioned the existing alley dwellings and united them with new houses in a three-sided court, opening to the street. The houses border a sodded and planted grassplot. Former alley houses are in the background.

# Report of

## THE ALLEY DWELLING AUTHORITY for the DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA for the FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 1936, TO JUNE 30, 1937

### The Authority's Program Assumes Form

THE ALLEY DWELLING AUTHORITY, during the past fiscal year, made progress that enables it to present a rounded picture of its program. In addition to projects carried to completion that illustrate various phases of slum reclamation and rehousing, it has accomplishments of greater significance and of definite value in guiding its future course.

Each of its projects is designed to accord with the character of its neighborhood as that neighborhood will be when it has become a social and economic asset instead of a liability. This necessarily prevents cheap or shoddy construction or land overcrowding. What the Authority does must stand the test of criticism 10 years, 20 years hence. Then critics will have forgotten, if they ever knew, the deplorable conditions dealt with by the Authority, and will judge the project on the basis of its then environment.

At the same time, in low-rent housing projects, the Authority must keep costs down in order that rents may be kept down. For the Alley Dwelling Act gives no authorization for subsidy. Each project is expected to pay for its cost. In its low-rent housing the Authority seeks economy in construction cost through simplicity in design. If the architect has sufficient taste and skill, simple design, embodying the essentials of good housing, can be combined with attractiveness. This, we believe, has been accomplished.

### Constitutionality Upheld

Supplementing its progress in developing reclamation projects the Authority has instituted three condemnation suits<sup>1</sup> through the office of the Attorney General. In two of these the constitutionality of the Authority's power to condemn was challenged and was upheld. The significance of this lies in the fact that the Alley Dwelling Act was pioneer legislation.

<sup>1</sup> One was tried after the date of this report.

When it was drafted there was no similar legislation in the United States applying to decadent or slum areas. The nearest analogies were laws dealing with reclamation of swamps and arid areas. These two decisions have an added local significance because the Alley Dwelling Act is the only statute designed to eliminate Washington's slums that has been sustained by the courts.

In both cases the defendants by demurrer challenged the validity of the use of eminent domain for the purposes stated in the Alley Dwelling Act. In the first, the Authority sought to acquire land and buildings constituting five alley dwellings which could not be purchased at a price satisfactory to it. In the other, the Authority is seeking to acquire not only alley property but property extending through from the alley to the street on which there exist both alley dwellings and street dwellings, and an adjoining vacant lot extending through from the alley to the street. This vacant lot is necessary for effective reclamation.

In overruling the demurrer in both cases and upholding the constitutionality of the Alley Dwelling Act, the court held in effect that Congress in the exercise of its sole legislative power over the District of Columbia could validly authorize the use of eminent domain to correct an evil which had not and could not be corrected by use of the so-called police power; that slum reclamation is a public purpose and a public use within the purview of the Constitution; that the disposition to be made of the property so acquired was incidental to the primary purpose of acquisition, and that Congress is clearly authorized to dispose of property acquired by the United States of America.

The decisions of the court in the two cases above mentioned are the first cases in which a court has held that acquisition of land by eminent domain for slum reclamation is valid.

### The Authority and Private Enterprise

The Authority demonstrated in two instances during the period of this report, the practicability of cooperating with quasi-public agencies and private individuals in the elimination of inhabited alleys, and the restoration of the cleared sites to effective use. In these instances, the Authority sold sites purchased by it, after having demolished the alley dwellings and adjacent substandard structures, discarding its own plans for redevelopment of the sites with public funds on being assured of an equally beneficial redevelopment by the purchasers. Such sales assist materially in achieving the objective of the Authority by bringing private financing actively into the work of slum reclamation, and they restore to the Treasury money that can be used by the Authority in the reclamation of other squares.

Apropos of this cooperation with nongovernmental agencies and individuals, it may be recalled that when the Authority began its work, fear was publicly expressed that it would invade the legitimate field of private enterprise. During the past fiscal year, there has been no such expression. From the time of its organization, the Authority has said, and repeated at every opportunity, that if private enterprise will reclaim squares containing inhabited alleys, will provide good housing for families of the lowest income, the Authority will welcome this activity. It has gone further, and has urged private enterprise to do these things. But so far there has been no response.

In this invitation, the Authority is perfectly sincere. It wishes to see Washington cleared of its slums and equipped with an adequate supply of good low-rental housing. The sooner this is done, the sooner it can write "finis" to its assigned task. If any resident of Washington believes that private enterprise can and will do what the Authority is doing, the Authority invites him to present his proposal. This, of course, does not include proposals involving Government participation. It means straight private enterprise.

### Financial Policy

In 1930, when the Alley Dwelling Act was drafted, completion in 10 years of a program of alley slum reclamation and rehousing was contemplated by the sponsors of the act. This time limit, however, was based upon two major considerations:

1. A 3 million dollar revolving fund, to be available at the beginning of operations.
2. The existence of hundreds of vacant low-rent dwellings in private ownership, to which families dehousing on the sites of the Authority's operations might move.

In 1934, when the Alley Dwelling Act was passed, the 10-year time limit remained unchanged. But there was authorized for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the act, only \$500,000 subject to annual reappropriation, instead of the \$3,000,000 revolving fund. Furthermore, a housing shortage had absorbed all but a few of the habitable vacancies in low-rent dwellings. This forced the Authority to make rehousing one of its immediate concerns.

Accepting the limitations imposed by the capital provided, recognizing the lack of guiding precedents, knowing that its performance would be judged, not on the basis of a completed task at the end of a term of years, but on the basis of current work in process, and aware that the provision

of funds for continuing its program depended on an early demonstration of that program's practicability, the Authority distributed its small capital among a variety of projects to produce visual evidence of the value of slum reclamation.

Today, in addition to having actually reclaimed 11 squares containing 13 inhabited alleys, the Authority has created values at least equal in dollars to the amount of all funds made available for its use.

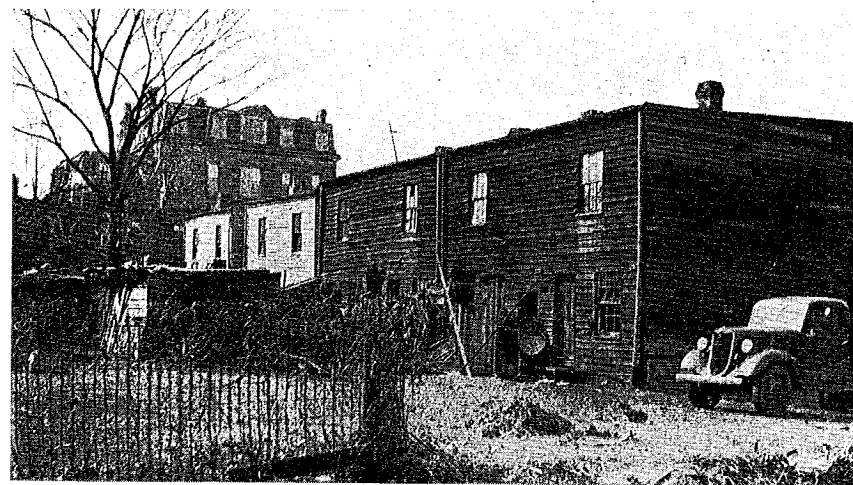
The Authority has never made a promise or a prophecy as to its program. But it has stated and now repeats that its financial objective is to end its work as promptly as possible and without a deficit. Obviously, it will not be able to complete its task by June 30, 1944, because of its small beginning and the delays due to a shortage of low-rent housing. Approximately two and a half years have passed since its establishment, and the Authority has not yet had a total capital one-third as large as originally contemplated. Lack of funds and lack of alternate housing have combined to prevent the Authority from reclaiming squares containing the largest alley communities because the cost of acquiring and redeveloping the requisite property in one such square would exceed its total capital.

The smallness of the Authority's capital during the past fiscal year has been due to continued congressional consideration of the Wagner-Steagall housing bill.<sup>2</sup> As the Administration could not know what provision this bill would make for the District of Columbia, proposals for amendments to the Alley Dwelling Act and for appropriations to the Authority were necessarily held in abeyance. When it became evident that enactment of the Wagner-Steagall bill would be delayed, the President made an allocation of funds that enabled the Authority to continue with some of its most pressing projects.

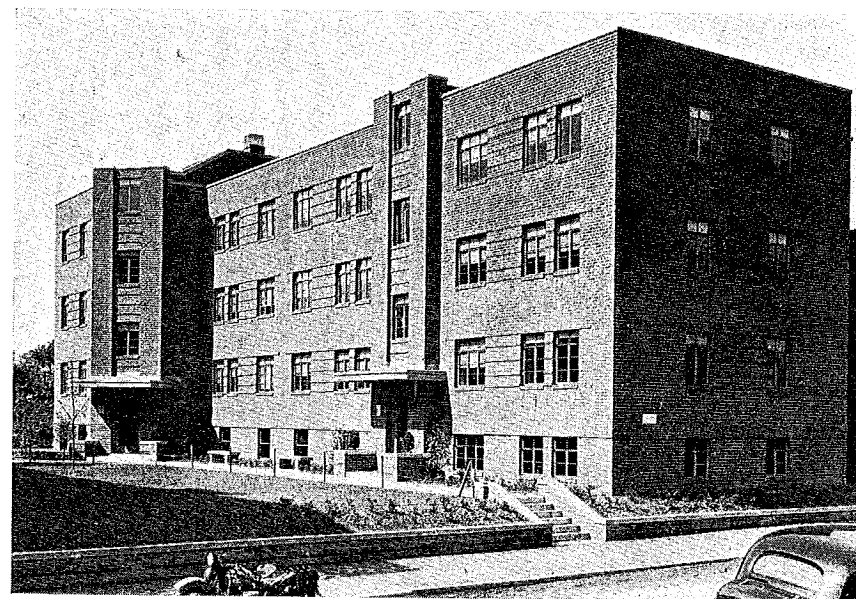
### Financial Practice

Having as its financial objective that it shall conclude its program without a deficit, the Authority maintains a constant check on all costs. This means that before any of the Authority's funds are obligated for a project, the site is carefully studied and an approved new use is shown to be economically justified, so far as estimates can be made on the basis of experience and current knowledge. The individual parcels in the site are evaluated by an appraisal committee. Problems of design, construction, materials, equipment, and maintenance are subjected to staff discussions during

<sup>2</sup> Approved Sept. 1, 1937, as the U. S. Housing Act of 1937. Section 28 of this act authorizes the President to make available to the Alley Dwelling Authority, from any funds appropriated or otherwise provided to carry out the purposes of the U. S. Housing Act, such sums as he deems necessary to carry out the purposes of the Alley Dwelling Act.



THESE MUST GO. *Wooden alley houses in Blands Court, south of Howard University grounds, are scheduled for acquisition and demolition by the Alley Dwelling Authority. New dwellings will occupy the site.*



COMPENSATION. *In the square next to that shown above, the Authority already has erected two apartment houses to compensate for unfit dwellings it has demolished. One of these apartment houses is pictured here. New dwellings must be in keeping with the neighborhood as it will be when reclaimed.*

the study phase of the project, for the dual purpose of avoiding extravagance and of making a preliminary estimate of revenues from the completed project. When submitting plans and specifications to contractors for bidding, the Authority sends copies to the Building Trades Council, a local organization composed of building trades unions, for suggestions leading toward elimination of unnecessary costs and jurisdictional disputes. If bids received from contractors are considered too high to insure the economic success of the project, the bids are rejected and plans restudied.

In accepting the lowest responsible bid, the Authority takes advantage of savings presented by alternate items in the specifications, if the saving is considered sufficient to compensate for a preferred material, design, or procedure.

Administrative expenses of the Authority are held down to those necessary to maintain a staff that can function effectively, recognizing that one ill-advised purchase, one badly designed building, one instance of faulty construction, not to mention a mistake in policy, would cost much more than the salaries involved.<sup>3</sup> This is an axiom in all business and in the case of private housing estates has led to the statement that a certain number of dwelling units, say 200 or 300, are required for economical operation, in order to carry necessary overhead. The scale of the Authority's operations thus far has been too small for current receipts to carry overhead. Its present fortunate position with respect to assets is due not only to careful planning and economical practices, but to the enhanced values which follow the assembly of many small parcels of real estate into larger, unified tracts that have a greater economic as well as social value. This kind of site assembly is inherent in the Authority's program. In this connection it should be noted that the Authority's books carry, as the total value of a site, only the actual aggregate cost of the small parcels thus brought together. This book value, therefore, may not reflect the present actual value of the site.

### Financial Status

At the opening of the past fiscal year, the immediate financial resources of the Authority amounted to \$316,380.70.

This sum comprised the balances of the Authority's original fund and of the \$200,000 allocation of December 1935; it included also receipts from rents, demolitions, etc.

<sup>3</sup> To get the benefit of competent outside comment, the Authority, on June 18, 1937, formally requested the General Accounting Office to make a thorough study of its accounting set-up and practice. This study resulted in the raising of a single question and that question was as to the reason for a detail of practice.

The actual amounts from these sources were:

Balance of \$500,000 appropriation .....	\$126, 492. 29
Balance of \$200,000 allocation .....	183, 722. 55
Receipts from demolitions, rents, etc. ....	6, 165. 86
Total .....	316, 380. 70

However, only \$50,765.74 of this total was available for new projects; for \$49,314.87 had been formally committed under construction contracts, and \$216,300.09 had been allotted to specific active projects.

The Authority would have been gravely affected in proceeding with its program had not the President, on March 15, 1937, authorized an additional allocation of \$250,000. Under the terms of this allocation the money could be used only for construction or demolition; none could be used for land acquisition or administration. Moreover, the Authority was required to expend or to obligate by contract all of this amount on or before June 30, 1937, or to return unobligated funds to the Treasury. As all of the fund could not be effectively used for construction within the prescribed period, an unobligated balance of \$74,368.33 was returned to the Treasury on July 20, 1937. This sum included a small balance from the \$200,000 allocation, of which \$9,806 had been rescinded previously.

In the course of the fiscal year, the Authority added substantially to its regular fund in the Treasury. This was accomplished by sales of sites, rents from completed projects, revenues from demolitions, etc., amounting to \$103,737.68, as against \$6,165.86 during the fiscal year 1935-36—a total reimbursement to the fund of \$109,903.54.

The Authority closed the fiscal year with immediate resources amounting to \$352,840.91, made up of the following items:

Balance of \$500,000 appropriation .....	\$47, 941. 83
Emergency funds committed by contract .....	194, 995. 54
Receipts from sales, rents, etc. ....	109, 903. 54
Total .....	352, 840. 91

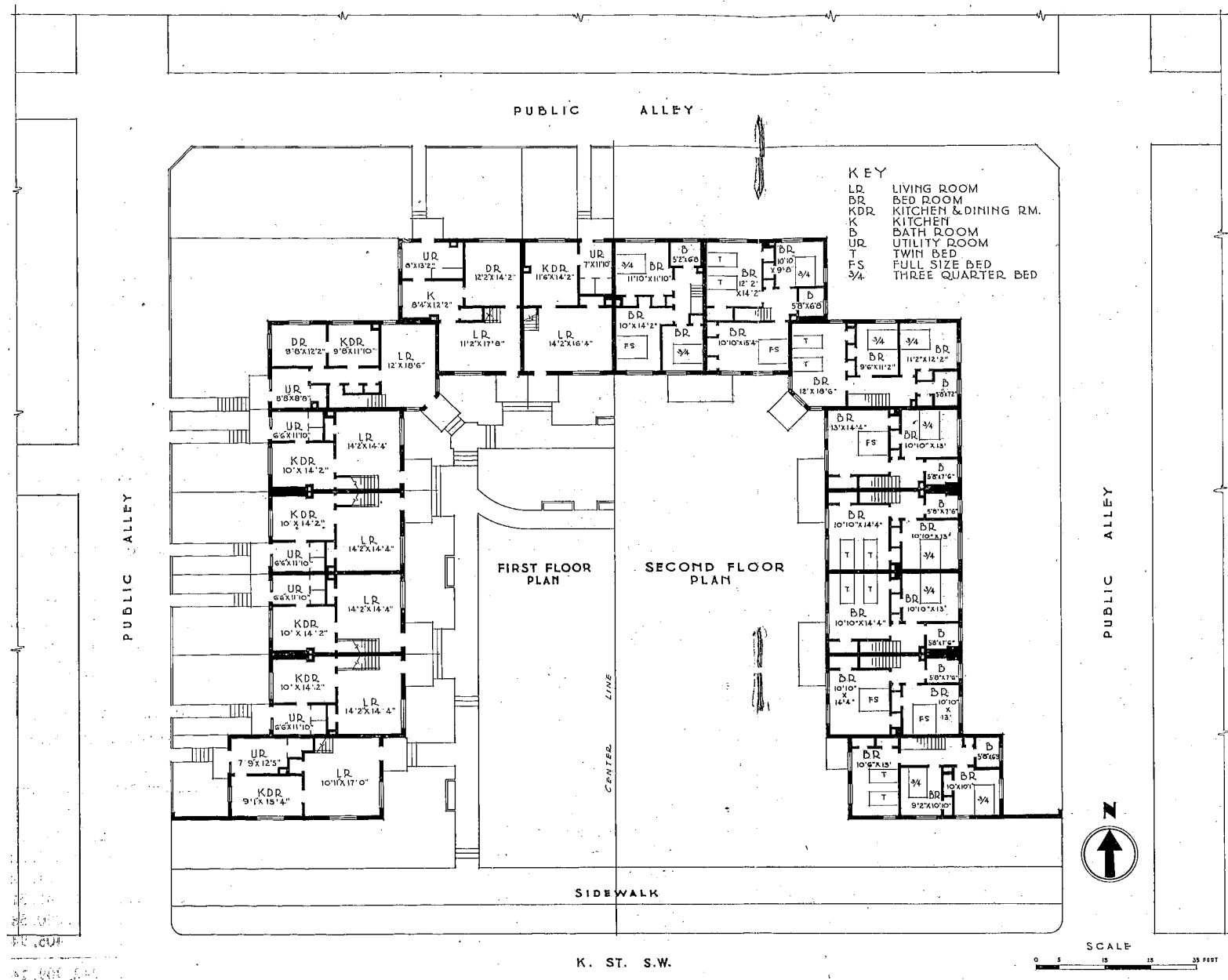
Of this total, however, all but \$17,998.49 had been obligated under contracts by June 30, 1937, or had been allotted to active projects and current costs.

Expenditures by the Authority during the period of this report are divided as follows:

Construction of projects .....	\$164, 331. 97
Acquisition of sites .....	43, 265. 32
Miscellaneous project costs .....	1, 004. 02
Administrative salaries .....	31, 841. 31
Miscellaneous administrative costs .....	2, 060. 58
Equipment and furniture .....	405. 94
Total .....	242, 909. 14



# PLOT PLAN AND FLOOR PLANS OF HOUSING PROJECT ON K STREET ALLEY SITE



THIS DRAWING combines the plot plan and the plans for first and second floors of the housing project being constructed by the Alley Dwelling Authority on K Street SW., between Sixth and Seventh Streets, where the Authority demolished dilapidated alley and street houses. As seen from K Street, the 16 row-type dwellings form an inverted U, facing on a central plot which will be sodded and planted. Each dwelling has rear access to a public alley. Considered as a whole, the drawing shows the plot plan. The building plan on the left side shows the arrangement of rooms on the first floors, with walks leading to the front doors. On the right, the arrangement of the second floors is shown. The houses have no cellars, but each has a utility room.

## Project Practice

While developing its program through the constant addition of new projects, the Authority keeps informed as to opportunities for purchase of sites in all squares containing inhabited alleys. On learning that a particular square offers opportunity for redevelopment, the Authority's staff studies that square to determine how it best can be redeveloped in the public interest.

If the staff agrees that the proposed redevelopment will serve the public interest and at the same time will reimburse the Authority for its expenditures, the project with supporting data is presented to the Authority for approval. It also is submitted to the District Commissioners and to the National Capital Park and Planning Commission for approval as to proposed replatting and/or method of condemnation if condemnation is involved. If it receives approval, an initial allotment for acquisition is made available, and the work of securing the site begins. Sometimes a square is given preferred status because of a petition by neighboring owners or residents.

To secure current, comprehensive and exact information on the inhabited alleys, the Authority staff makes resurveys of these alleys at various times as other work permits. It has found to its surprise that the number of inhabited alleys had not decreased in recent years as much as expected. There still are approximately 176 squares containing alley dwellings. The number of dwellings in a square varies greatly, ranging from 1 or 2 in a forgotten corner to large alley communities such as Navy Place where there still are 60 alley houses. The Authority has found also that alley buildings that for many years were converted to nonresidential use have been reconverted for dwelling purposes, in whole or in part. In one alley, families were found living in corrugated iron garages. In another, an abandoned concrete garage was used as a dwelling.

These studies are not confined to squares known to contain inhabited alleys because of discoveries such as those described above. The character of the surrounding squares also is taken into consideration, and in some sections areas covering several city blocks must be studied to plan intelligently the redevelopment of a single square.

Careful site purchasing follows the selection of a square. Before any attempt to purchase is made, the proposed site is outlined and a tentative plan for redevelopment is made to assure that this site will permit of a development that is socially and economically desirable. Then the owners of property within the boundaries of the approved site are approached. When the Authority began site acquisitions, some owners believed it would, as a matter of routine, pay 130 percent of the assessed value of any parcel

it acquired, this being the highest amount permitted by the Alley Dwelling Act. Instead, the Authority has paid as low as 61.39 percent.<sup>4</sup> Sums awarded in condemnation suits have ranged from 85.19 to 124.15 percent. The average of all site purchases, up to and including June 30, 1937, has been 112.8 percent of the assessed value.

Ability to purchase at such fair prices has been due to the fact that the Authority is not confined to any particular site or area. Its purchases have been made in all four quarters of the city. It has negotiated with owners of many more parcels than it has bought. If it found their prices too high, the Authority has simply ended negotiations unless the parcel in question was essential to carrying through a project. In that case, it condemned.

The Authority conducts a progressive and continuing search for means whereby construction undertaken by it can be made less costly, longer-lived, and more attractive. This means that the technical staff seeks information on new construction materials, new processes, new plans. It means also that members of the staff visit sites of public and private construction activity throughout the city and in nearby Maryland and Virginia, seeking always better and less costly ways to redevelop squares containing inhabited alleys. Instances of advances in simplicity of design are always sought out and examined; for, as previously stated, simple design is considered a key to economical construction and maintenance.

In the preparation of plans for low-rent housing projects, ample provision is made for the essentials of good housing: Light, air, sanitation, adequate space. Though its housing developments are in closely built sections of the city, lot coverage is kept far below what is permitted by law even if this means fewer families on the site than were there under former conditions. The rooms in the Authority's new dwellings are of generous size. They have abundant light and have through or cross ventilation. Each new dwelling has a fully equipped bathroom. These are not only socially desirable, they also are economies from the point of view of an investment owner, for they will prevent vacancies during periods of housing surplus.

One result of construction study by the Authority staff was development of the fact, during construction of the W Street Apartments, that, under the District of Columbia Building Code, any dwelling more than two stories in height will cost more *per cubic foot*, more *per room* than will a two-story building. In the case of low-rent housing projects, this fact is vitally important, for it materially affects the rents that must be charged. When this fact became evident, the Authority limited its two succeeding low-rent apartment projects to two stories in height.

<sup>4</sup> This was the price for a single parcel. The average price for all parcels in a square is given in table I.



DECAY. *The Alley Dwelling Authority bought and razed these houses in K Street Alley SW. By acquiring also the adjoining neglected vacant lots and tumble-down street houses, the decay spot in an otherwise good square was cut out and a site suitable for redevelopment obtained.*



CONSTRUCTION. *On the K Street Alley site, the Authority is constructing its first housing development for white tenants. This photograph shows the ample provision made for light and ventilation in the 16 row-type houses which comprise the development.*

Preliminary plans on each project are submitted to the Authority for its approval. Approval carries with it an allotment of funds to defray the cost of construction and of preparation of working drawings and specifications

### Social Practice

While the stated purpose of the Alley Dwelling Act is to rid Washington of its inhabited-alley slums, there is an implicit underlying, deeper purpose that must be achieved if the stated one is to have validity. This deeper purpose is assurance that all residents of Washington, however low their economic status, shall live in decent dwellings. The scope of the Authority's responsibility is defined in the act. But other public agencies entrusted by other laws with responsibility for living conditions, play an important part, and there always is the hope that private enterprise, perhaps through the medium of limited-dividend corporations, may assist.

To the extent of its powers, however, the Authority accepts responsibility. Where it can acquire property that lends itself to a low-rent housing project, it provides low-rent housing. In making this provision it recognizes a variety of needs—needs of large families and small families—needs of families in all of the stages of earning capacity from zero to self-support. In recognition of the problems presented, the Authority's low-rent housing is not all of the same level.

In Hopkins Place it has built the simplest dwellings that it believes an informed public opinion will accept as Washington's minimum for new construction from this time on. It has there also reconditioned old dwellings that it is able to let at even lower rentals. But these involve compromise that would not be acceptable in new houses. So they are considered interim dwellings that, during their comparatively short life expectancy, will help to bridge the gap between past and future.

The W Street Apartments were designed for a somewhat higher income group, and from the time of the earliest discussions of this project the Authority has hoped the apartments might be purchased by a limited-dividend company and so make the capital invested in them available for a new project. With this in mind, the project was discussed with representatives of a Negro group who proposed to organize such a corporation and the plans were developed in consultation with them. It still is hoped that the corporation may be formed.

The W Street Apartments are justifying themselves. Despite the large volume of building in Washington during recent years, very little has been constructed for families of low-income, and except for Langston, the P. W. A. development on Benning Road, and a small private development



near the district line, few dwellings have been built for Negroes. The W Street Apartments, therefore, met a very acute need. An indication of this need may be found in the fact that 350 applications for the 30 apartments were received in the Authority's offices before the development was completed, and many later applicants were turned away.

While the period covered by the Authority's work is much too short to warrant any final conclusions, the evidence seems to show that not only can dead or decadent areas—areas in which buildings have been dilapidated or ruinous for decades or even generations—be converted from community liabilities into community assets, but, what is far more significant and important, that the majority of families who now exist miserably in our slums are willing and able to respond when opportunity is given them to raise their standards of living.

The often repeated assertion by which some of the well-to-do seek to comfort themselves, that the poor live as they do because they like it—that they could live better if they wished—is, of course, false. But the difficulty has been to prove its falsity when there was no opportunity for the poor to live better. The best housekeeper could not keep her house clean when floors are splintered or rotten, when plaster is broken and a harbor for vermin, when a dilapidated, rusty sink with cold water is her utmost resource. The low-rent housing projects of the Authority are offered as evidence that the majority of the low-income group will respond to the opportunities and obligations of good dwellings. So the Authority seeks to aid them.

Illustrative of the Authority's attitude toward its tenants is the case of a widowed mother with three daughters. At the time she became one of its tenants she was receiving \$45 a month for W. P. A. work, \$36 a month from the Public Assistance Division of the Board of Public Welfare, \$25 of which was a rental allowance. The eldest daughter was receiving \$6 from the National Youth Administration. This made a total family income of \$87 a month. Later she became physically incapacitated and was classified as unemployable. This eliminated the \$45 wage. The Public Assistance Division then increased its allowance by \$25. During this period, however, the eldest daughter lost the \$6 from the National Youth Administration. Then the second daughter became 16 years of age and the P. A. D. thereupon automatically reduced its allowance by \$25. Meanwhile, the Board of Public Welfare ruled that assistance given to home-care cases should be at the rate of \$25 per month for each child under 16, and that this amount could not be augmented. The total family income was, therefore, reduced from \$87 per month to \$25. When there was surplus food available to the P. A. D., the family could draw on it.

The Authority took up this case with the Board of Public Welfare as

illustrative of extreme hardship practically certain to wreck a fine family that was making every effort to maintain itself. At the same time it advised the mother that her two older daughters leave school and seek employment. This they did and their earnings, when they are able to secure work, now contribute to the family income. The Board of Public Welfare later revised its ruling so it will be possible to provide adequate relief for some such families in exceptional cases. Pending this revision the Authority carried the rent so that the \$25 allowance might be spent for other necessities.

There are, of course, tenants of another kind—those who do not seek work and who, even when they have money, pay no rent if they can avoid it. At the beginning there also was a rather wide-spread impression among tenants that a governmental agency would be negligent in collecting money due it. This impression had to be corrected. So two tenants of the Authority's low-rent dwelling projects have been dispossessed through legal procedure during the period of this report. A third tenant upon whom a dispossession notice was served for nonpayment of rent, made up his arrears and has continued to pay on time.

The same procedure has been necessary with tenants of non-dwelling property. Lessees of two garages, for example, became delinquent and finally made arrangements to pay what they owed only when faced with judicial proceedings.

In its demolition work, the Authority had to deal with another phase of this problem; tenants of the old buildings, knowing that their occupancy would soon cease, refused to pay rent for the last month or two and then refused to move to dwellings where they must pay rent. Fifteen notices of eviction were necessary in order to acquire possession. None of these families was actually evicted.

### Accomplishments

During the past fiscal year the Authority has demolished 77 houses and has completed:

Hopkins Place SE., low-rent housing for Negroes.

W Street Apartments NW., low-rent housing for Negroes (occupied July 15, 1937).

It has let contracts for, and work is now in process on—

K Street project SW., low-rent housing for white families.

St. Mary's Court NW., low-rent apartment house for Negroes.

It has acquired the property necessary for reclamation in—

Oddfellows Court SE.



ST. MARY'S COURT. *This inhabited alley in the "West End" of Washington has been demolished in the course of the Alley Dwelling Authority's program.*



NEW DWELLINGS. *Instead of the alley houses and worn-out street buildings which occupied the St. Mary's Court site, the Authority is building this two-story apartment development.*

It has sold its acquisitions in—

Bissels Court NW., to The George Washington University.

Valley Street NW., to a private developer (part of acquisition still retained).

At the beginning of this fiscal year, July 1, 1936, the Authority had five completed projects:

Rupperts Court SE., automobile repair shop.

Browns Court SE., storage garages.

Douglas Court NE., storage garages.

Stanton Court NW., storage garages.

O'Brien Court NW., automobile parking lot.

It has begun acquisitions in three other squares. For one of these it has made plans that include group, one-family houses and an apartment house. For another it proposes one-family houses.

Some 20 additional squares are now being studied to determine the best form of redevelopment, and to estimate the probable costs of acquisition and development. The speed with which this work will be carried forward depends chiefly upon the capital available, though, if condemnation suits are necessary, there will be delays due to court proceedings.

#### Description of Projects

*Hopkins Place, L Street between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets SE.*—Twenty-three row, four room, one-family brick dwellings; twelve new, eleven reconditioned. The reconditioned buildings are former, half ruinous alley dwellings which have been opened to the street. The new dwellings form two wings extending from the street back to the reconditioned houses. All except five of the reconditioned houses have complete bathrooms; five retain the outdoor type of toilet attached to the house; its door opening directly from the rear house door. This is considered preferable to having the toilet open directly into the kitchen, the only practicable alternative, though that would have made it technically an indoor toilet. All of the reconditioned houses are considered interim dwellings. The new dwellings are considered the least that an informed public opinion will accept for new construction in Washington. Basic equipment for all dwellings, reconditioned and new; electric light, coal range and hot water tank, sink with hot and cold water. In new houses, gas pipes so gas plates may be used for cooking in summer, and ice boxes. Heating is by coal stoves. Kitchen equipment differs, some houses having shelves, others work tables, cabinets and larders open to the outer air for food preservation in winter. Rent varies according to equipment; in reconditioned dwellings \$13.55 and

\$15.55 per month; in new dwellings \$25, \$26.25, \$27.50, and \$28.75 for the one most desirable house.

*W Street Apartments, W Street between Second and Fourth Streets NW.*—Thirty-one apartments (one for janitor) in two, three-story brick buildings facing on a central lawn that extends from street to alley. First plans called for concrete wall construction in the belief it would be more economical. Bids were so high all were rejected and plans redrawn to provide brick walls and other economies with resultant saving of \$31,212. Central heating (steam), hot and cold water, electric light, mechanical refrigeration. Each apartment has kitchen (gas stove, refrigerator, cabinets, table) and three-fixtured bathroom. Rents are: two-room apartments, \$25 per month; three rooms, \$30 and \$32.50; and four rooms \$35.

*St. Mary's Court, Twenty-fourth Street between G and H Streets NW.*—Twenty-four apartments in a U-shaped, two-story concrete-block building framing a central lawn that opens to the street. Site formerly occupied by dilapidated alley and street houses. Contract let toward the end of the fiscal year. Equipment will be similar to that of the W Street apartments except for mechanical refrigeration. Rents will be determined when complete costs are known.

*K Street Dwellings, K Street between Sixth and Seventh Streets SW.*—Sixteen one-family, two-story houses of concrete block. Site formerly occupied by dilapidated alley and street houses. Contract let toward the end of the fiscal year. The houses are grouped about a central lawn that opens to the street. They range in size from four to six rooms. Each has a fully equipped kitchen, except for refrigerator, and a three-fixtured bathroom. Each has a utility room (no cellars). In the larger houses the utility room will contain a furnace. Furnaces may be installed in the smaller houses if experience proves it desirable, meanwhile they will be heated by stoves. Rents will be determined when complete costs are known.

### Other Projects

The Authority's completed nondwelling projects were described in its preceding report. Other projects, including two for low-rent dwellings, are in the acquisition stage and will be described in future reports.

### Organization and Personnel

The Alley Dwelling Authority was created by Executive Order No. 6868 in accordance with the terms of the act. The President appointed as members of the Authority: the president of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia, the executive officer of the National Capital

Park and Planning Commission, and the Director of Housing, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. These officials are: Melvin C. Hazen, who has been chairman from the beginning, Arno B. Cammerer and Howard A. Gray. The Authority appointed John Ihlder to be executive officer. The other members of the staff are:

James Ring, administrative assistant.

Maurice V. Brooks, attorney.

Walter P. Hudgins, land acquisition officer.

Daniel N. Mandell, accountant.

Willard S. Isham, Jr., job superintendent.

Teresa O'B. Scott, office secretary.

Charles H. Flagg, rehousing assistant.

Park A. Bacon, Jr., draftsman.

Eleanor H. Evans, clerk-stenographer.

Dorothy M. Zeaman, junior clerk-stenographer.

The Authority has a tenant-caretaker at Hopkins Place and a janitor at the W Street apartments.

The architect of the Authority's projects is Homer J. Smith, whose services are loaned by the Municipal Architect's Office on a reimbursable basis.

JOHN IHLDER, *Executive Officer.*



# STATISTICAL TABLES

TABLE I.—Site acquisition, as of June 30, 1937

Name of alley, section, and square No.	Number of dwellings on site		Area of project—		Purchase price	Assessed value	Relation of purchase price to assessed value	Cost per square foot
	Alley	Other	Needed	Acquired				
			Square feet	Square feet			Percent	
Rupperts Ct. SE., 762	5		2,358	2,358	\$3,796	\$3,796	100.00	\$1.61
Douglas Ct. NE., 785	10		7,191	7,191	15,380	13,867	110.90	2.21
O'Brien Ct. NW., 104	34	19	50,640	50,640	117,456	109,813	118.15	2.32
Browns Ct. SE., 870	8		4,535	4,535	4,464	6,269	71.00	.98
Bissels Ct. NW., 56	4		39,988	39,988	75,431	62,927	120.00	1.89
Hopkins Pl. SE., 1023	11	2	19,946	19,946	13,600	11,369	119.60	.57
Stanton Ct. NW., 37	4		2,178	2,178	3,350	3,198	105.00	1.54
St. Marys' Ct. NW., 42	8	11	21,838	21,838	39,142	32,013	122.30	1.79
Valley St. NW., 275	13	3	11,937	11,937	17,752	18,898	94.00	1.49
Blands Ct. NW., 3070	3	1	22,061	22,061	11,918	12,763	93.30	.54
Blands Ct. NW., 3072	11	14	46,876	17,700	8,950	10,450	85.60	.51
K St. Alley SW., 470	8	9	30,944	30,944	30,363	27,319	111.00	.98
Burdens Ct. NW., 557	2	2	7,964	3,306	2,577	2,614	99.00	.78
Dixons Ct. SW., 541	47	14	35,638					
Oddfellows Ct. SE., 926	6		3,920	3,920	4,075	3,973	102.56	1.04
Daggs Lane SE., 5869	5	19	269,156					

<sup>1</sup> Includes area acquired through condemnation.

<sup>2</sup> Includes amount of condemnation award.

TABLE II.—Costs of projects completed or in process, as of June 30, 1937

Name of alley, section, and square No.	Site cost <sup>1</sup>	Development cost <sup>2</sup>	Total cost	Building contract cost (cubic foot) <sup>3</sup>	Sales price	Description of project
Rupperts Ct. SE., 762	\$3,709.10	\$5,953.00	\$9,662.10	\$0.338		Automobile repair shop.
Douglas Ct. NE., 785	15,913.92	10,691.95	26,605.87	.224		Storage garages.
O'Brien Ct. NW., 104	116,457.50	3,011.46	119,468.96			Automobile parking lot.
Browns Ct. SE., 870	4,442.77	6,798.86	11,241.63	.238		Storage garages.
Bissels Ct. NW., 56	76,318.60		76,318.60		\$87,080	Sold to George Washington University.
Hopkins Pl. SE., 1023	13,931.30	56,930.88	70,862.18	4.297		1-family houses—12 built; 11 reconditioned.
Stanton Ct. NW., 37	3,377.50	4,789.50	8,167.00	.308		Storage garages.
Valley St. NW., 275	17,567.80		17,567.80		\$11,800	Part of site sold to private purchaser for Negro hotel.
Blands Ct. NW., 3070	11,910.25	120,033.98	131,944.23	.409		Apartment building; 3 stories, 31 units.
Total	263,628.74	208,209.63	471,838.37			
Projects in process:						
St. Marys Ct. NW., 42	38,994.20					Apartment building; 2 stories, 24 units.
K St. Alley SW., 470	30,550.32					1-family houses; 16 under construction.

<sup>1</sup> Site cost includes purchase price, cost of title certificates, cost of condemnation, and demolition credits.

<sup>2</sup> Development cost includes cost of plans and specifications, construction, grading, surfacing, material tests, equipment, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Cubic foot cost is based on total amount paid for construction and equipment of buildings.

<sup>4</sup> Applies only to new buildings.

<sup>5</sup> Price for which Authority sold part of assembled site.